



State of Utah

GARY R. HERBERT
Governor

GREG BELL
Lieutenant Governor

Office of the Governor
PUBLIC LANDS POLICY COORDINATION OFFICE

JOHN HARJA
Director

M1047(0103.
cc: Leslie

November 29, 2011

Leslie Heppler
Department of Natural Resources, Division of Oil Gas and Mining
1594 West North Temple, Suite 1210
P.O. Box 145801
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-5801

Subject: Supplement State Comment
Red Leaf Resources mining proposal
RDCC Project Number 29300

Dear Ms. Heppler:

The State of Utah recently provided comments on the Red Leaf Resources proposal to develop a large mine on State Trust Lands in Uintah County. These additional comments are added as a supplement to that letter. We appreciate your consideration of these supplemental comments as they contain important information to assist in your decision process.

Department of Natural Resources
Division of Wildlife Resources
Big Game

The location of the proposed mining expansion occurs within crucial winter range for both mule deer and elk. Crucial winter ranges are those geographical areas which hold habitat features considered crucial to the long-term survival of migrating wildlife during winter months. In an effort to reduce impacts to wintering wildlife, UDWR recommends seasonal timing stipulations prohibiting construction and other surface-disturbing activities from December 1st through April 15th within big game crucial winter ranges.

UDWR recommends compensatory mitigation for any direct loss of crucial habitat at a ratio of 1:4 (for each acre of direct disturbance, four acres are targeted for restoration efforts). UDWR biologists are willing to work with the proponent to develop meaningful and appropriate projects as compensatory mitigation for this activity. Mitigation actions could be coordinated cooperatively within the framework of the Utah Partners for Conservation and Development (UPCD), which includes partnerships with UDWR, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, SITLA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and other governmental

entities. The UPCD has identified high-priority areas in need of restoration in habitats in the vicinity of the project area.

Increased mining activity will require additional personnel and equipment, including heavy truck traffic. Increased traffic, especially involving heavy trucks, creates additional disturbance to wintering wildlife outside of the immediate area of the mine, and will result in increased wildlife/vehicle collisions. These related impacts should be considered in the overall evaluation of the project. Possible mitigation could include partnering in the installation and maintenance of wildlife crossing structures and associated fencing along portions of Seep Ridge Road that provide access to this project.

The loss of browse plant species key to the survival of wintering mule deer is of great concern to UDWR. Prior to the implementation of the project, the proponent should develop a reclamation plan outlining the methods and measures to be taken for interim and final reclamation. The reclamation plan should specifically address all aspects of successful reestablishment of vegetation critical to the survival of mule deer in the area including: seed storage, the proper timing and planting methods for seeding, seeding depth, and seed-variety pounds per acre.

Additionally, the reclamation plan should outline appropriate reclamation objectives, especially for browse plant cover, and should be monitored for successful attainment of those objectives. If reclamation should fail, the proponent should continue efforts to reestablish vegetation until the goals and specific objectives identified in the plan are realized. UDWR is available to assist the proponent with reclamation planning for the project area.

Two Waters Wildlife Management Area

UDWR requests that the proponent maintain the integrity of all fences that are disturbed during the mining process. An allotment fence in the project area prevents cattle from accessing the Two Waters Wildlife Management Area (WMA), owned by UDWR. This allotment fence must be kept functional if relocated by the project proponent. Without a functional fence, livestock management will be impacted, and "trespass" cattle will freely enter UDWR lands causing unintended changes in the vegetation community on the WMA.

In addition, UDWR uses the Klondike Canyon Road, a Uintah County "Class D" Road, to access the WMA. The road is also used for sportsmen's access. This road should remain open for public and administrative access to the WMA, or a suitable alternative should be provided by the project proponent.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this proposal and provide comment. If you have any questions, please call Alex Hansen in UDWR's Vernal office, at (435) 781-5358.

Leslie Heppler
November 28, 2011
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The State of Utah appreciates the opportunity to review this proposal and we look forward to working with you on future projects. Please direct any other written questions regarding this correspondence to the Public Lands Policy Coordination Office at the address below, or call Judy Edwards at (801) 537-9023.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Harja', with a stylized flourish at the end.

John Harja
Director